

## **Canaveral National Seashore Nature & Science Overview**

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Canaveral National Seashore (CANA) was created by an act of Congress on January 3rd, 1975 to "...preserve and protect the outstanding natural, scenic, scientific, ecologic, and historic values of certain lands, shorelines, and waters of the State of Florida and to provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of the same...".

The park contains 58,000 acres of barrier island, open lagoon, coastal hammock, pine flatwoods and offshore waters along the east central coast of Florida. It represents an excellent example of a relatively stable barrier beach backed by a productive lagoon system.

The park's 24 miles of undeveloped beach is the longest such stretch on the east coast of Florida. Mosquito Lagoon, which comprises over two-thirds of the park, is designated an Outstanding Florida Water and as a part of the 155-mile long Indian River Lagoon (IRL), an Estuary of National Significance. The IRL is considered the most diverse and productive estuary in North America. Mosquito Lagoon supports nationally-recognized commercial and recreational fisheries for finfish, clams, oysters, blue crabs and shrimp.

The park provides habitat for 14 federally-listed (Threatened and Endangered) animal species, ranking it second in the entire National Park Service. Three sea turtle species deposit approximately 4000 nests on the beach each year. Large numbers of waterfowl and wading birds utilize the Seashore as a migratory stopover and wintering ground. Located along the "frost line", the park contains a rich and unique mixture of subtropical and temperate plants found nowhere except central Florida.

CANA is superb example of a national park unit where interagency cooperation is paramount. Located at the northernmost end of Kennedy Space Center, approximately two-thirds of the park is owned by NASA and much of that is co-managed with the adjacent Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. The park is working with these agencies on numerous projects such as feral hog control, exotic plant removal, restoration of impacted wetlands, long-term monitoring of natural resources and implementation of prescribed fire. Additional partnerships with state and local agencies include sea grass monitoring, mosquito control, water quality monitoring and law enforcement patrols.